Price rise due to spurt in share market

† 2316. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite the unprecedented rise in share market, there is increase of nearly 20 per cent in the price of food stuff (Thali) for common man in the country;

(b) whether Government are going to take any measures to check the inflation and to provide food to all; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) There is no direct relationship between the rise in share market and the rise in the food prices. Annual inflation rate based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for the week ending February 18,2006 for food grains was 7.26 percent as against 1.29 per cent in the corresponding week of last year (week ending February 19, 2005).

Government is concerned about the price increase of various essential commodities and undertakes measures as may be required to contain the same. The anti-inflationary policies of the government in the recent past included fiscal and monetary discipline; rationalization of excise and import duties to lighten the burden on the poor; freeze on central issue prices under the targeted public distribution system (TDDS) for wheat and rice; import of wheat to augment supply in the Southern zone; and regular monitoring of retail and wholesale prices of essential commodities.

Levy of surcharge on Income Tax for Gujarat earthquake

2317. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) how much amount has been collected by Government by levy of surcharge on income tax for Gujarat earthquake;

(b) how much amount has been disbursed to Gujarat out of the collected surcharge;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) how much amount is yet to be disbursed to the State Government of Gujarat; and

(d) by when the remaining amount would be disbursed and what are the reasons for delay in disbursement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The surcharge on income tax for Gujarat earthquake was in force for financial years 2000-01 and 2001-02. An amount of Rs. 2,187.82 crore has been collected under the head "Surcharge" for financial year 2000-01. This amount also includes collection in respect of surcharge for other pruposes including Kargil war and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). Separate figures for collection I respect of surcharge for Gujarat earthquake for 2000-01 are not available.

In financial year 2001-02, there was no other surcharge on income tax in force except surcharge for Gujarat earthquake. A collection of Rs. 556.89 crore has been reported under the head "Surcharge" for financial year 2001-02.

(b) Apart from a non-plan grant of Rs. 750 crore provided to Gujarat for earthquake relief during 2001-02, the Central Government has also disbursed to the Government of Gujarat an amount of Rs. 500 crore crore in financial year 2001-01 and an amount of Rs. 967.37 crore in financial year 2001-02 from the National Calamity contingency Fund (NCCF)

(c) The entire amount due to be disbursed to the Government of Gujarat for earthquake relief and rehabilitation, as per the norms laid down under NCCF, has already been disbursed toit. No further amount is proposed to be disbursed to the Government of Gujarat from NCCF on account of earthquake relief and rehabilitation. It is mentionable that there is no necessary co-relation between the amount collected as surcharge and the amount disbursed from NCCF for a calamity.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to para (c) above.

Change of damaged notes

2318. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued instructions to various banks to change damaged/spoiled currency notes;

(b) if so, what are the details of such instructions;